

DFEH News Brief

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For Immediate Release

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CALIFORNIA CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FAIR EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING ACT

SACRAMENTO - The California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) is celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) which established the department as the state's civil rights enforcer.

In proclaiming October 18, 2005, as "Fair Employment and Housing Day" in California, Governor Schwarzenegger announced to California residents the state's commitment to protecting the civil rights of Californians.

"Californians have the right to live and work without the fear of discrimination," said State and Consumer Services Secretary Fred Aguiar. "We must do everything we can to educate and remind the public about avoiding unfair treatment of all Californians. Sometimes, even unintentional acts end up crossing the line because of a lack of awareness and understanding of the law."

The DFEH also launched a public awareness campaign to help educate Californians about how to help prevent discrimination. The effort includes radio public service announcements and printed materials to be distributed to businesses and the public.

"California is rich with diversity and we should embrace the many differences found throughout our society," said DFEH Director Suzanne Ambrose. "The Department is committed to preventing discrimination through education and ensuring through enforcement that everyone has an equal opportunity to seek, obtain, and hold employment and housing without discrimination."

In 1980, the FEHA was passed establishing the DFEH and the Fair Employment and Housing Commission as the state's civil rights enforcement agencies. The DFEH investigates and prosecutes allegations of discriminatory practices in employment, housing, and public accommodations, and discriminatory practices involving hate violence.

During Governor Schwarzenegger's tenure, the FEHA has been further strengthened. Last year, the Act was amended to require employers with 50 or more workers to provide supervisory employees two hours of sexual harassment training every two years. In response to this new requirement, the DFEH is conducting training for employers throughout California. More information on DFEH's training is available at its website.

This year, the Governor signed bills that will help purge discriminatory property records, extend the statute of limitations for minors to file discrimination complaints, and clarify that the Unruh Civil Rights Act and related statutes to include the protected bases of marital status and sexual orientation. For more information on these events, please contact Regina Brown at (916) 478-7251.

For more information about the work of the DFEH or the laws it enforces, including the Fair Employment and Housing Act, Unruh Civil Rights Act, and Ralph Civil Rights Act, call (800) 884-1684 (employment, public accommodation, hate violence); (800) 233-3212 housing; (800) 700-2320 TTY, or visit the DFEH's website: www.dfeh.ca.gov.

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